2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

601 third party. He could send for him to accompany him to war
604 or to make a long journey at the chief's bidding. Case histories
614 of older Bemba show frequent instances of men having settled in villages far from their original birthplace because they had 'followed their *nalume*' on some distant expedition in warrior days and had remained there. Nowadays the *nalume* can only exert these powers if he is of superior status to the father, or if the latter is away, or dead. The *nalume* has also certain rights over his maternal niece—also called *umwipwa*. He is consulted about her marriage and usually given a share of her marriage payment (*mpango*), which is technically speaking 'eaten' by the father.[1]

177 Direct European teaching and the introduction of a money
604 currency have strengthened the father's authority over his children as against those of the mother's brother. The former pays tax for
593 the household, buys the children's clothes, and pays the school fees. But, on the other hand, marriage is less stable under modern conditions, partly owing to the break-down of marriage morality and partly to the absence of so many men at the mines. In these circumstances, those few men who remain in the villages are bound to look after their sisters' children as well as their own in the last resort.

601 The paternal aunt, the *nyina senge*, also has rights over her
604 brother's children and particularly his daughters. She is believed
614 to have power to bless or curse her brother's daughter (*umwana senge*) with fertility or barrenness, and is much feared on that account.[2] In the old days she could demand her niece as a substitute wife for her husband—the *mpokoleshi* marriage described on p. 115, or as an additional one.[3] But the rights and duties of the *nyina senge* do not determine the residence of her *bepwa*, male and female, to any extent. However, it must be remembered
582 that cross-cousin marriages unite the households of brother and sister even more intimately than before, and that where the boy marries his *nyina senge's* daughter, he will go to live in her village, just as he who contracts a union with his *nalume's* child, goes to live in the latter's community. The sample village analysed

[1] This custom, an act of grace to the *nalume*—not his right, has become more important nowadays since money from 2*s*. 6*d*. to £1 has been substituted for the two bark-cloths given as *mpango* in the old days.

[2] And also given a share of the *mpanga* if possible.

[3] Nowadays this right seems to be rarely exerted. I only met three cases of its occurrence.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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in Chap. X shows a number of such cross-cousin marriages uniting the children of brothers and sisters together and the proportion of marriages of this type in Bemba society is 30 per cent. according to my figures.

Hence in any Bemba village it is common to find the headman, and the other elders of the community, responsible for the welfare of the two types of group—a primary matrilocal extended family composed of a man's wife, his daughters and their husbands, his granddaughters and their husbands, and possibly his wife's mother, and a secondary matrilineal descent group composed of a widowed or deserted sister and her children married or unmarried, or her grandchildren. In each case his duties may extend to relatives in the classificatory degree if these are left destitute, or to kinsfolk of the headman's predecessor in the same degree, i.e. mother, sister, daughter. His relationship to the members of the two groups may be represented thus and his pattern of behaviour to each entirely different:

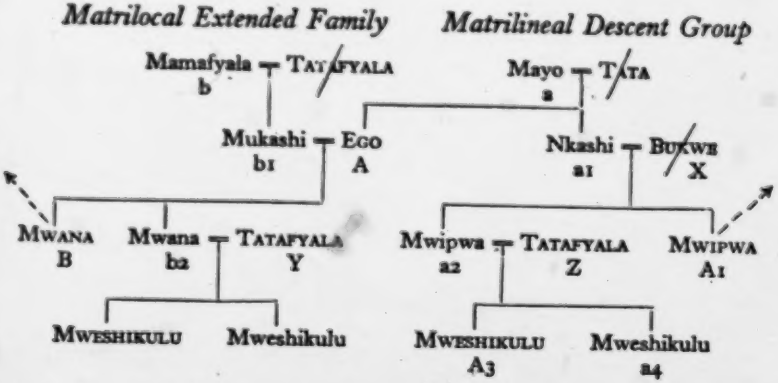

DIAGRAM: N.B. Men represented by capital letters; women by small type; a line through a name represents death; an arrow means residence in another community. A is here head of:

(*a*) his own matrilocal extended family in which his daughter b2 marries and remains in his village and his son B marries elsewhere. He is also supporting his widowed mother-in-law (b);

(*b*) the female relatives of his matrilineal descent group: his mother a, his sister a1, whose husband X is dead and whose daughter a2 is married in the village, while her son A1 has married outside. By cross-cousin marriages between A1 and b2 or B and a2 these two men would have remained in the village.

Mayo = my mother
Mukashi = my wife
Tata = my father
Bukwe = my brother-in-law or in-law generally

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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I met two attractive sisters left unmarried long after the usual time and asked the reason. I was told, 'Their husbands come and live here a short time, and then they go. They say, "The mother is mean. She stints us of porridge. She gives us no respect." ' In the same way I have heard young men discussing the pros and cons of cross-cousin marriage and concluding, 'Cross-cousin marriage is not so good. Our aunts (*banyina senge*) do not give us as much respect as other women would. They do not send us food every day or cover the dishes elegantly.'

The importance of the offering of food to the son-in-law continues long after the wife has become an independent householder, cooking on her own. His mother-in-law continues to send him dishes. In fact, the offering of food by the woman to the man is one of the essential obligations of kinship and other social ties. It is part of the legal duty of a wife to cook porridge for her husband and to allow him a predominant share of it, and hence it becomes a privilege and a matter of pride. I noticed that young girls, recently betrothed, would intimate this fact by saying shyly: 'I have begun to cook for him.' Older married women will beg, borrow, or work for food to supply their husbands if their own granary is empty. Each wife in a polygamous household will cook for her husband even if she has insufficient for herself, so that a husband may get two or three dishes of porridge while a wife and her children may go short. I saw a second wife, whose garden had been destroyed by locusts, live with her three children for two days entirely on mushrooms, while the last remnants of her millet were ground up daily to provide a diminutive dish of porridge for her husband, the latter amply supplied by his more fortunate head-wife, who had so much surplus millet that she sat at the other end of the village brewing beer with it. To my question as to why the second wife did not keep her grain for herself and her children and leave the first to supply the husband, the reply was immediate: 'Because she hates her fellow wife.' The rivalry natural between co-wives was expressed in the competition over the provision of food. The Bemba woman's prestige largely rests on her power to provide porridge and relish for her male relatives and to serve it nicely. These are the dues a man expects from his mother-in-law, his wife, and a number of other women in his kinship group.

It is the *umucinshi*[1] that matters to both parties, as well as the filling of the belly. Hence the women in a village do not attempt

[1] [i.e., custom. – Analyst]

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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596 groom finds the early years of married life so irksome that the
591 union breaks up and he returns to his own home. Bemba recognize the difficult situation of the son-in-law and make jokes at the expense of the young bridegroom alone in his wife's village without kinsmen to support him. On the other hand, if the husband can live through these first years and the marriage proves itself stable, he can himself acquire status and prestige as head of his own extended family with sons-in-law working for him, whether he moves to one of his own relative's villages or stays where he is.

596 The second source of conflict is, of course, that between the
604 father and the mother's brother for the control of the former's children and this is a tension inherent in the matrilineal system. The Bemba father is head of his own extended family and is the chief authority in his children's lives during their early years. He has rights over his daughters' marriage payments, and over the labour of his sons-in-law; his sons may decide to live with him, if he is a man of rank and popularity. Nevertheless the mother's brother is the legal guardian of the children, as we have seen, and can command his uterine nephews' services and can control the marriages of his uterine nieces if he pleases.

591 The Bemba girl is also in a position of conflict when she marries. She is happy with her mother and sisters in a village to which she belongs, but her husband may demand to take her, after a few years of married life, to some other village where his own relatives live. These difficulties are overcome if the husband marries within
582] the village and there are various forms of preferential marriage, with the daughter of the father's sister for instance, which do not involve the moving of the girl from her mother's home.

596 In the case of a successful marriage which has endured for a number of years and has resulted in the birth of several daughters both the man and the woman reach an advantageous position. The father is head of an extended family and whether he lives in his wife's village, in his mother's brother's village, or has managed to start a small community of his own, he is in a position of power and authority. The woman in her turn, wherever she lives, has a group of closely related households co-operating with her. If she remains in her own village her married sisters will be near her; if she moves to her husband's village her own married daughters will

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
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The Ceremony

[88] 'Giving the child her *mbusa*' lasted far into the night and drumming and singing became somewhat languid as time went on.[1] 'Why doesn't the *nacimbusa* sing the song alone?' I asked a rather weary-looking woman. She looked startled at such a stupid question. 'But of course, each of the *banacisungu* must sing the words herself,' she said. It seemed to me a very significant remark to which I shall refer again.

The coming of the bridegroom

It was a relief when the hut-door opened and a shout went up, 'The bridegrooms have come!' Up till now the bridegrooms had been represented by female substitutes but at this culminating rite the *shicisungu* himself appears, or should appear. In fact, one of the girls was betrothed to a man away at the mines and he was represented by his sister, the mock bridegroom of the previous rites. The other girl was not betrothed, but one of her male cross-
[582] cousins took the part, since the cross-cousin is the preferential mate for a Bemba girl.

The bridegrooms came in gaily carrying bows and arrows. In front of them crawled two young girls, their sisters, carrying bundles of firewood strapped on their backs. They sang:

> '*You have not come back from fetching the firewood*
> *From where you went looking for faggots.*' (No. 33)

Meanwhile, each of the girls had been put to sit against the wall under the round spot representing her. The young brides were now dressed decorously with their cloths folded neatly over their breasts. They looked prettily demure rather than dazed and silent as heretofore. Neither looked up to watch the bridegrooms come in.

The bridegrooms then broke into a new song and took on a swaggering gait across the room, debonair, nonchalant, half-laughing. They danced, singing:

> '*I have tracked my game;*
> *Now I have speared my meat.*' (No. 34)

[1] The songs themselves are short but with a minimum of four singers, each repeating the couplet at least six times, the length of the 'giving the child her *mbusa*' can be imagined.

614 it must be emphasized that the matriclans in this area are in no sense political or territorial groups. Through clan affiliation a man traces his descent, his rank, and, if he belongs to the royal clan, his right to succeed to chieftainship. In the old days substitution of men or women in the payment of blood revenge could take place within the clan. But no property is owned in common by the clan. There is neither joint occupation of land nor collective ritual activities. The distinguishing features of the Bemba clan are the name, praise-name and legends associated with the original ancestress and also, in some cases, with her brother.

554 614 616 Characteristic aspects of these Bemba clans are the hierarchy of status in which they are ranged and the reciprocity of paired clan relations. The former is based on the alleged priority of the arrival of clan ancestors in Bemba country and also proximity to the heart of the country. Highest in rank and forming the royal clan are the Crocodiles. This hierarchy is to be observed in other groups in the area, though the royal clans differ. Clan names, generally those of natural objects, animals, birds etc., have been called totemic, although there are few, if any, food taboos associated with them.(1) The words used are frequently archaic and are common to other groups in the area, e.g. Lamba, Kaonde, Lala. The story of their acquisition is the basis for the pairing of opposite clans. The clans paired seem to be those whose clan symbols are naturally antipathetic or complementary to one another, e.g., fish and crocodile, mushroom and rain. They are not paired systematically but often by purely arbitrary factors connecting the clan with several such partners.

616 764 582 602 Reciprocal functions of a paired clan are chiefly confined to funeral rites.(2) The *'banungwe'*, the name used reciprocally by members of paired clans, of a dead man's family both help and hinder at the burial ceremony. Ritually expressed, therefore, the traditional attitude between partners is one of hostility yet, as the complementary nature of the clan names often implies, one of service. Between partners there is ease and freedom of behaviour, privileges are taken and formerly, it is said, marriages between them were preferential. Briefly, reciprocal clan relationship among the Bemba implies ritual interdependence, partnership of rivals expressed in ritual, traditional joking and licence in daily relations and preferential marriage claims.(3)

613 [591] Within the Bemba clan a loosely organized group called "the house" (*inganda*) is recognised which is composed of the descendants of one woman. Richards points out that this matrilineage is in no sense a corporate group.(4) The members of the "house" trace descent to one woman and remember the village where this woman lived. They do not, however, live in one place since the rules of residence at marriage necessitate the scattering of both male and female members of the matrilineage throughout a number of villages. No property is owned in common by its members, nor is its senior male in a position of political authority, although he has certain powers over the women of the group and their children. This dispersed

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, p.62. Food taboos do exist among the Tabwa, see Vleugels J. 1948. (2) Richards, 5, 1937.
(3) This is marked among the Tabwa. See Vleugels, op.cit.
(4) Richards, 9, 1950.

595 Polygynous marriages occur throughout this area and the second marriage of a man is usually virilocal instead of uxorilocal. Save for chiefs, however, the polygynous household is not a recognised social unit as it is amongst the patrilineal southern and eastern Bantu. Where commoners marry two or more women, the second or third wife often lives in a different part of the village. Among chiefs, however, the wives live in huts fenced [622] round by a common stockade. Nowadays polygyny is not generally practised by commoners, though chiefs may have as many as several dozen wives. A sample of 209 Bemba marriages in the Chinsali district in 1939 showed 68% to be monogamously married, while an earlier sample showed 59%.(1) Similar figures are not available for the other tribes in the area.

● 582 Marriage within the Bemba clan is not permitted and Bemba themselves say they are prohibited also from marrying within their father's clan. This is not strictly true, since the preferential marriages of the Bemba include cross-cousins on both the father's and the mother's side. A further preferential marriage is that between a man and the classificatory grand-daughter. From 144 marriages in 6 villages, 49% were between cross-cousins and a further 7% with grand-daughters.(2) A chief, but not a commoner, may marry the daughter of a son. A woman has rights over her brother's daughter, whom she may demand as an additional wife for her husband, or as a substitute, should she herself be tired of her partner and wish to return to live with her brother.

Inter-tribal marriages appear to be common today but formerly marriage was not allowed between members of tribes which believed that they shared a common origin. Gouldsbury, for instance, states that marriage was forbidden between the Bemba and the Northern Alungu, Senga and Aushi, but was permitted with the Southern Alungu, Tabwa, Lunda, Lamba, Bisa and Chishinga.

Divorce

586 Divorce was and is common amongst the Bemba, particularly in the early years of married life when the union is considered in some respects to be on trial. Where divorce occurs the children belong to the mother and her matrilineage, and no return is made for the service of the son-in-law or his token presents. Unga divorce rates, resulting from the absence of husbands from home, are extremely low according to Brelsford.(3) Formerly divorce seems to have been a family affair among the Unga, action being taken by the family of the injured party. Data for other tribes in this group are not available. Throughout this area main grounds for divorce appear to be the following: sterility, adultery, failure to perform domestic duties, or desertion on the part of the woman; impotence, ill-treatment and prolonged desertion on the part of the man.

FAMILY AND FAMILY EXTENSION

596 Among the Bemba the basic domestic unit is not usually the individual household composed of a man, his wife and young children, but a group of related households consisting of a middle-aged or old man and his wife, their married daughters and the latters' husbands and children. A young Bemba

(1) Richards, 8, 1940, Table A. (2) Richards, 8, 1940.
(3) Brelsford, 2, 1949, p.103.

643 At state functions the Kazembe appeared sitting on a stool placed upon
292 lion-skins. He was shaded by a canopy of umbrellas made of coarse native
293 cotton fabric(1) and wore an elaborate head-dress of scarlet and yellow
534 feathers, the *muconzo* cloth adorned with bead and cowrie ornaments, the
535 *insipo* girdle of hide,(2) and the *lukano* armband, emblem of his office.(3)
His notables and musicians sat nearby. Ceremonial dancing was performed
to the accompaniment of music.(4) Musical instruments(5) were *marimba*(6)
(a sort of xylophone), *chincufo*(7) (a basso drum), *imbirebire* (big conical
drum with cowhide or an elephant's ear stretched over the open end), *gomati*
(two pieces of iron connected by a curved rod). The *mondo*,(8) a hollow
wooden cylinder beated with drumsticks, was used to convey messages by means
of varying combinations of beats. The big sacred *chaabancua* drum,(9) rest-
ing on a lion's skin in Kazembe's palace, was only brought out in wartime to
accompany the armies.

521 Clan and tribal history and family genealogies are favourite subjects
526 of discussion at beer-drinking parties. District and village rivalry now
finds expression in football matches.

BIRTH, MARRIAGE, DEATH

842 The male alone was thought to be instrumental in begetting children.
847 Babies who cut their upper teeth first were destroyed as bearers of bad
551 luck.(9) An infant is usually given the name of one of its dead ancestors
on either the paternal or maternal side; this gives some indication of an-
cestry. Chinyanta, Lukwesa, Ilunga, Muonga, are characteristic Lunda
names.

●582 The effective exogamous unit is the *cikota*. Preferential marriage is
with the *mufyala*, a person whose father is a fellow-clansman of one's mother
or conversely, and particularly with father's sister's daughter. A network
of affinal relationships thus develops between villages. In general there
583 are no definite preferences leading to marriages between certain clans, but
591 traditional reputations attaching to clans may cause their members to be
regarded as desirable or undesirable marriage partners. Marriage payments
are low. Both matrilocal and patrilocal marriages occur, but for the first
few years marriage is usually matrilocal so that the husband can "get
accustomed". He puts up a temporary hut in the *citente* of his parents-in-
law and becomes a member of their extended family. Later the couple are at
liberty to move. Often the parents of both spouses live in the same
595 village. Lunda marriages tend to be patrilocal. Polygyny is not frequent.
The second wife is usually inherited, e.g. she may be one's elder brother's
widow. A man may marry a younger sister of his wife but not an elder sis-
ter, since she is called *mayofyala*, "mother-in-law".

764 The dead are buried in the bush. A *mvali* (see p.86 above) of the de-
ceased takes part in the ceremony. To divert the thoughts of the partici-

(1) Burton, p.254.
(2) Valdez, II, pp.217-8; cf. Livingstone, I, pp.262-3; Burton, p.42; Bowdich, p.91
(3) Burton, p.253. (4) Valdez, II, p.227; Burton, p.114.
(5) Valdez, op.cit., pp.222-4; Livingstone, I, p.305.
(6) Burton, p.112; Valdez, op.cit., p.255.
(7) Gamitto, I, p.343. (8) ibid., pp.342-3.
(9) ibid., pp.331-2. (10) Livingstone, I, p.276.

7: Richards E-5 (1930-1934) 1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

(b) The common language (*Cibemba*), which forms a distinct dialect in native eyes, although it does not differ very considerably from the neighbouring *Cibisa* or *Cilala*. (*c*) The tribal mark, a vertical cut on each temple about 1 in. long behind the eyes. (*d*) The common historical traditions of the people—even young men at the present day speak with pride of the coming of their fathers from Lubaland, and take delight in describing the military exploits of their ancestors and the ferocity of the old chiefs. (*e*) Their allegiance to a common paramount chief, the Citimukulu, whose overlordship of the Bemba territory is unquestioned.

(*b*) *Social Grouping*. (1) *Kinship*. The Bemba are a matrilineal tribe practising matrilocal marriage. Descent is reckoned through the mother and a man is legally identified with a group of relatives composed of his maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters, his mother and her brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters. His membership of this group determines his succession to different offices and his status in the community, although in a matrilocal society it only occasionally determines his residence. He also belongs to a wider descent group, the clan (*umukoa*, plur. *imikoa*) which is also traced in the woman's line. Each *umukoa* is distinguished by the name of an animal, plant, or natural phenomenon, such as rain. It has a legend of origin usually describing the split-off of the clan ancestors from the original lineage group, and an honorific title or form of greeting. Clans are in effect exogamous, since a man may not marry a woman he calls 'mother', 'sister', or 'daughter', and these terms are extended to the limits of clan membership on the maternal side. Through his clan affiliation, a man traces his descent, rank —if he belongs to the royal clan—rights to succeed to certain offices, such as hereditary councillorship (cf. pp. 100, 108), and claims to his relatives' help and hospitality.

Some clans have a higher status than others, according to whether their original ancestors arrived in the country as part of the following of the first Citimukulu, or alternatively, split off as a separate descent group later. Thus the crocodile clan (*Bena ŋandu*) is the *umukoa* of the first immigrant chief and stands highest in status (cf. 'Rank'), while various others, such as the fish clan, millet clan, &c., are said to be of similar antiquity. The hereditary councillors described later belong to these clans. All the *imikoa* are paired with opposite clans that perform reciprocal ritual

614 fashion, if the two are *banungwe*, but I never heard this done. A man can also tease his 616 *munungwe's* wife and pretend to make indecent proposals to her. Lastly, *banungwe* may call down curses on each other with impunity [789] (*kulapishya*, a very serious curse believed to be fatal as among ordinary people). This is done nowadays jokingly at the time of the new moon. Time after time I have heard the crescent moon greeted by shouting children tearing round the village calling the names of their *banungwe*, saying, 'Moon! Come and eat the people of 'such and such a clan!'[10] *Banungwe* are said to be able to take each other's possessions without let or hindrance in joke at the time of the new moon. If a man seizes an axe from the hut of a member of an opposite clan, the owner has to redeem it with 1*s.* or some small coin. Men pretend to raid the huts of their female *banungwe*, and particularly to snatch any objects, clothes, or cooking pots, that may be set to dry on the roofs.[11]

• [582] There seems also to be evidence that the *banungwe* relationship was originally associated with reciprocal marriage rights. An intelligent old chief told me, 'A *Banungwe* used to marry each 'other in the old days. It was specially good to 'do so. It was like the marriage of cross-'cousins.' Another elderly informant explained, 'The *Banungwe* are our wives because we knew 'each other a long while ago and because there 'is no in-law avoidance (*mako*) between us. We 'used to exchange each other in the old days.[12] 'That is why there is no *mako*. All those 'women (*i.e.*, the *banungwe*) are our wives.' The younger native does not give a retrospective explanation of this sort but merely laughs and says he can shout at his mother-in-law if he has married a *munungwe*. It does not matter what

[789]

[10] The Bemba usually curse by Lesa, the High God, or by the ancestral spirits of dead chiefs. I only heard cursing by the moon on such occasions.

[171]

[11] The available data shows us that the Bakaonde also tease members of their opposite clan (*e.g.*, birds and kaffir corn clans, etc.) whom they call *Bunungwe*, which Melland translates as 'tease or victim.' He mentions small gifts such as beads, honey, or beer given by the chaffed man to the joker. Melland, *op. cit.*, p. 252. The Lamba clans are paired in opposites known as *awalongo*, some pairs resembling the complementary clans of the Bemba, and Doke states that the opposition between two clans is to-day confined to jesting, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[12] For exchange he used the reciprocal form of *Kusalushya*—to exchange, *i.e.*, *Kusalushyana*—this word being used for marketing or bartering goods.

[p. 191(B)]

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4
Wisa FQ5

her by her parents, but the general rule is that people seek their own partners. Certain rules have to be considered by whoever is trying to arrange the match. These determine which marriages are regarded as incestuous, and which marriages are preferred. The kinship relationship, age, ethnic group, and religion of the partner all have to be considered. With the passing of the regimental system, considerations of State no longer affect choice of marriage partner, except for near relatives of the chiefs.

A man may not marry anyone whom he addresses with a kinship term belonging to the first ascending or the first descending generation. This prohibits marriage between ego and his *mothers*, *fathers*, *mothers*, *brothers*, *affines*, and *children*.[1] In his own generation he cannot marry his *child's parents-in-law* and he cannot marry any *sibling* who is not a *cross-cousin*. In the second ascending and descending generation a man may address his female *grandparent* and his female *grandchild* as *wife*, and he can, to a slight extent, joke and refer in general terms to sexual activities in their presence. But Ngoni regard it as a typical Cewa custom for a man actually to marry his female *grandchild*, and do not approve of such marriages among their own people. A man may fondle the breasts of his grandmother and suggest in the company of others at a beer drink that his granddaughter should marry him, but that is as far as this joking goes.

A man is entitled, and to some extent expected, to flirt with his female *cross-cousins*. We have noted above that the Nguni peoples from whom the leaders of the Ngoni kingdom were drawn did not allow cross-cousin marriage. By contrast the Cewa and Wisa peoples, who were captured in large numbers from about 1870 on, came from societies in which local organization was based on bilateral intra-village cross-cousin marriage. In villages where there are now many people claiming Cewa and Wisa descent there are many instances of cross-cousin marriage. This form of marriage is by no means confined to people of low ethnic status, and even the Paramount Chief has married classificatory cross-cousins. In the aristocratic families it is sometimes suggested that an important man might marry a cross-cousin while still young and unable to muster a large marriage payment and then later marry an unrelated woman as his great wife. No distinction is made between marriage with father's sister's daughter and with mother's brother's daughter. The somewhat equivocal attitude towards cross-cousin marriage is seen in the conflicting statements of informants about payments in cross-cousin marriages. Some say that no payments ought to be made, for are they not all one family (*banja*). If payments were made it would mean that the family had split. Others say that payments can and ought to be made and that provided the cross-

[1] For the definition of these terms, see Barnes, op. cit. pp. 222 ff